

Biblical Theology

U2L15: Miracles

Defining Miracles

- Latin – marvelous event which causes wonder.
- Signs and Wonders

- Definition: An extraordinary event that is inexplicable in terms of ordinary secondary/natural forces, causing wonder in the observers and bearing witness to God.
 - Biblical Basis:
 - Plagues in Egypt, Parting of the Red Sea, Destroying the Walls of Jericho, Joshua Stopping the Sun, Balaam and the Talking Donkey, Shadrach, Mishak and Abednego, Daniel in the Lions Den, Jonah in the Belly of the Fish, et al
 - Jesus Turns Water into Wine, Walks on water, Feeds the 5,000, Healings, Raising Lazarus from the Dead, The Resurrection

Distinguishing Miracles

- Miracles must be distinguished from the following:
 1. **Common Providence vs. Extraordinary Providence**
 - Miracles occur when God's providence clearly defies secondary/natural cause.
 2. **Answered Prayers**
 - Though miracles can come about as a result of prayer, all answers to prayer
 3. **Works of Magic or Demonic Forces**
 - Signs and wonders can be counterfeit or demonic in nature.
 - *Matthew 24:24 - false prophets will...perform great signs and wonders*
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:9 - signs and wonders that serve the lie.*
 - How do we distinguish true miracles from demonic?
 - Discerning the message the accompanies the miracle
 4. **Exotic Occurrences**
 - Uncommon or improbable occurrences should not be mistaken as miracles.

New Covenant Purpose

- Purposes
 1. **To authenticate the message of the Gospel.**
 - *John 5:36 - works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.*
 - *John 3:2 - no one could perform signs you are doing if God were not with him.*
 - *John 4:29 - "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did."*
 - *Hebrews 2:3-4 - God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles*
 2. **To help those in need.**
 - *Matthew 20:30-34 - Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.*
 - *Matthew 14:14 - he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*
 - *Luke 7:13 - he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."*
 3. **To bring glory to God.**
 - *Matthew 9:6-8 - they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.*
 - *John 9:3 - but that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

Continuation of Miracles?

- Do miracles still happen?
 - Though greater occurrences in the New Testament, no indication of cessation.
 - *Mark 16:17-18 - And these signs will accompany those who believe:*
 - *John 14:12 - Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do;*
- Improper motivation to seek miracles:
 - To advance Personal power or fame?
 - *Acts 8:21-22 - for your heart is not right before God.*
 - To be entertained?
 - *Luke 23:8 - he was hoping to see some sign done by him.*
- Proper motivation to seek miracles:
 - To authenticate the message of the Gospel.
 - Help those in need
 - Bring glory to God

Discussion Questions

1. What reservations do you struggle with in regard to miracles?
2. How would you respond to someone expressing a desire to see a miracle?
3. Is it wrong to desire to see miracles? Explain.
4. If you were to witness a miracle, what steps would you take to discern its authenticity?

Reading Assignment

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 18: Prayer